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Perceptions of nursing students and nurses assessed using an eye movement observation device

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Aim: The present study aimed to determine the ways to improve observation and assessment abilities during basic nursing education by defining differences in the perceptions of symptoms and subsequent actions between nursing students and nurses at the bedside.

Methods: Ten junior and 10 senior students at a nursing school and nine qualified nurses wore a device that tracks eye movement. The nurses and students assessed symptoms in a simulation of a patient complaining of fatigue and perspiration in a mock hospital room. They were then questioned about what they perceived as the most important issue and how they would deal with it.

Analysis: The main areas observed included the face, a drip injection device, the bed surroundings, the feet and the areas of the body that were perspiring. The ratio of the amount of time taken to assess each item to the total duration of observation was calculated. Responses to the questions were classified as observations, impressions, hypotheses, verification and judgments.

Results: Among the participants, 43.9%, 50.9% and 57.6% of junior and senior nursing students and qualified nurses, respectively, spent most of the time observing the face. Significantly more nurses than students observed the feet, whereas significantly more junior students spent time observing other areas ($p=0.02$). The answers to the questions indicated that other than the face, most participants in all groups paid more attention to other areas. Significantly more qualified nurses than junior students included responses classified as judgments ($p=0.01$), and the nurses reached conclusions based on their observations.

Discussion: The objectives of the visual assessment of the patient was not clear to the nursing students, whereas the qualified nurses considered various possible causes of the symptoms, actively observed them, consistently judged the level of urgency and prioritized the need for assistance.

Biography

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